



# GREEN & BLUE

*on the streets of LA*

Story and photos by Sgt. L.A. Salinas



Above left, Sergeant Mark G. Stainbrook is a reserve major in the Marine Corps and serves as 1st Brigade commander for 3rd Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company. Stainbrook is one of many Marines and former Marines who work for the Los Angeles Police Department. Above, Stainbrook surveys the situation before he talks with members of his team regarding a stolen motorbike in LAPD's Southwest Division Monday.



Sergeant Mark G. Stainbrook interviews a suspect during a motorbike theft investigation Monday in southwest Los Angeles. The reserve Marine major is one of many Marines who work for the Los Angeles Police Department. The LAPD is hiring and will be testing applicants June 16 at 6 p.m. in Building 520590, Classrooms Nos. 9 and 10.

## LAPD seeks Marine vets to help handcuff street crime

LOS ANGELES — The sergeant-in-charge calls roll. Then the assembled warriors go over intelligence reports and receive information about the upcoming day's duties. Their offices are outlined with maps that pinpoint "enemy" positions. A grizzled Vietnam War veteran sits at a desk monitoring a radio for information about his sector of operations. The similarities make it easy for a Marine to feel right at home at the Los Angeles Police Department's Community Safety Operations Center — a springboard for monthlong LAPD "deployments" targeting street-gang operations. The department prides itself as a quasi-military organization. Marines who are looking to transition from the Corps to a career in law enforcement might do well to try the City of Angels. "We are the best law enforcement police agency in the United States, probably even the world. We have 9,200 police officers right

now, we need more," said Michael Hillmann, commanding officer of department's Special Operations Bureau, who says he's bullish on Marines. "I'll take every Marine I can get my hands on," Hillmann added. It's constant readiness for war on the streets here. For example, outside the Staples Center on Monday, after the Lakers won their final Western Conference game, dozens of LAPD riot police officers decked out like space troopers — helmets, face shields, flak jackets, large guns, riot batons that look like baseball bats — lined the streets outside the stadium to deter revelers from going wild. The show of force worked. Earlier that evening, gang members in the Southwest Division threw a party — a cookout, of sorts. The kids were invited — and even toted balloons bearing the gang's moniker, in this case, "62 Bloods." More than 100 partiers —



A suspect is arrested after an interview regarding a stolen motorbike in southwest Los Angeles Monday.

most of them wearing some form of red to denote their gang affiliation — were attending the outing at an inner-city park. One gang member apparently recognized Sergeant Mark G. Stainbrook, a Marine Reserve major, driving past the park on patrol and turned away, apparently to mask his identity. "When it comes down to

it, most of these guys are cowards," Stainbrook said. Several plain-clothes units were staked out in nearby unmarked vehicles peering through binoculars. A few drug arrests were made, but no violence broke out. Like the Marines, LAPD officers not only prepare for war — they say they take care of their own. Former Marines pepper their organ-

ization. They've kept their bond as a band of brothers — but they've carried it over to the "civilian" sector. Police Officer Andrew Gonzalez was a staff sergeant before he heard the calling of the police department. As a Marine, he learned to take criticism — making the transition to the LAPD much easier, he said. "The camaraderie and expectation of professionalism is still well-maintained in the police department as in the Marine Corps," Gonzalez said. The job is high-demand and affords little opportunity for error, he added. Even more is expected of a former Marine, he said. "If you screw up, and don't take the time to do your homework, you're gone. There's thousands of people waiting in line to take your job," he said. Police officer Kevin Beard says former Marines are readily adaptable to the mean streets of L.A. They adapt to the rank structure and the expectation of pro-

fessionalism more easily than the other applicants, he said. "They're better prepared, not just for the process (of becoming a police officer), but out on the streets as well," he said. Stainbrook, a Hughesville, Md., native, explains why he joined the LAPD. "I wanted to be the best," said Stainbrook, 35. "The LAPD reminded me of the Marine Corps, a good organization with a good reputation." Some of the LAPD's "billetts" sound like those in the Corps — including "training officer" and "squad leader." "Marines have a natural advantage," Stainbrook said. "We have quite a few Marines with LAPD and they do an outstanding job in general because of their Marine Corps training and background." The LAPD will be a giving a testing in Building 520590 in the 52 Area, Classrooms Nos. 9 and 10. Test results will be valid indefinitely.